GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3997
ANSWERED ON:10.08.2017
National Water Framework Law
Singh Shri Parvesh Sahib

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a draft National Water Framework Law is under consideration and if so, the details and the current status thereof;

(b) whether all the States have taken the draft law into consideration and if not, the details of the States which have not considered the same along with the rationale behind the same; and

(c) whether a tentative date has been fixed to achieve consensus on the draft law and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION

(DR. SANJEEV KUMAR BALYAN)

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. A Committee constituted by this Ministry on 28.12.2015 under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mihir Shah suggested a draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 which inter-alia, contains provisions for an overarching national legal framework with principles for protection, conservation, regulation and management of water as a vital and stressed natural resource. The salient features of the draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 are at Annexure-I.

The draft Bill was circulated to all the States/Union Territories and the concerned Central Ministries for obtaining their comments. The details of the States that have furnished their comments on this draft Bill are at Annexure-II.

(c) No, Madam. Fixing a tentative date for achieving consensus is subject to concurrence/support of the State Governments/UTs. However, Secretary of this Ministry vide D.O. letter dated 20.01.2017, has communicated the benefits of National Water Framework Law (NWFL) to the Chief Secretaries of all States/UTs and requested them to support the Bill. The Hon'ble Minister (WR, RD & GR) vide her letter written on 14th & 21st March, 2017, has also requested Chief Ministers of all States/UTs to pass suitable resolutions in their State Assemblies in support of the draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016.

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Annexure-I

(Annexure referred to in reply to Parts (a) & (b) of the Unstarred Question No.3997 to be answered on 10.08.2017 in the Lok Sabha regarding "National Water Framework Law")

SALIENT FEATURES OF DRAFT NATIONAL WATER FRAMEWORK BILL, 2016

The Draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 seeks to provide an overarching national legal framework based on principles for protection, conservation, regulation and management of water as a vital and stressed natural resource, under which legislation and executive action on water at all levels of governance can take place.

2. The Bill proposes that every individual has a right to sufficient quantity of safe water for life within easy reach based on the principles of integrated river basin management. The States shall hold water as a Common Heritage Resource and in Public Trust.

3. The draft Bill states that the appropriate government shall strive towards rejuvenating river systems with community participation, ensuring:

(a) 'Aviral Dhara' − continuous flow in time and space including maintenance of connectivity of flow in each river system;
(b) 'Nirmal Dhara' − unpolluted flow so that the quality of river waters is not adversely affected by human activities; and
(c) 'Swachh Kinara' − clean and aesthetic river banks with ecological integrity.

4. It proposes that the appropriate government shall take all measures to protect the ecological integrity necessary to sustain eco-systems dependent on water. Governments should adopt people-centered decentralized water management, for both surface and ground water. Local rainwater harvesting, watershed development and participatory irrigation management shall be prioritized, while recognizing, encouraging and empowering local initiatives.

5. It proposes that the appropriate Government shall take into consideration the following:

(a) Water use and land use
(b) Appropriate treatment and use of wastewater
(c) Standards for water quality and water footprints
(d) Water use prioritization.

Provided that these uses of water are consistent with the objectives of sustaining aquifers and eco-systems indispensable to long term sustenance of the resource.

6. The draft Bill lays high priority to Integrated River Basin Development and Management, wherein a river basin, including associated aquifers, shall be considered as the basic hydrological unit for planning, development and management of water. Each State Government shall develop, manage and regulate basins of inter-State rivers through a River Basin Master Plan to be implemented by an appropriate institutional mechanism.

7. It proposes for establishment of a River Basin Authority for each inter-State river basin, or for a sub-basin for sub inter-State river basin wherever appropriate for optimum and sustainable development of the inter-State rivers and river valleys, with active participating and cooperation by all basin States to ensure equitable, sustainable and efficient utilisation of water resources with emphasis on demand management through conjunctive and integrated use of resources. Each River Basin Authority shall prepare a Master Plan for the River Basin.

8. The Bill proposes that the appropriate Government shall prepare and oversee the implementation of a Water Security Plan for (a) attainment of sufficient quantity of safe water for life and sustainable livelihoods by every person; and (b) ensuring water security even in times of emergencies like droughts and floods.

Annexure-II

(Annexure referred to in reply to Parts (a) & (b) of the Unstarred Question No.3997 to be answered on 10.08.2017 in the Lok Sabha regarding "National Water Framework Law")

THE DETAILS OF THE STATES FURNISHED THEIR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL WATER FRAMEWORK BILL, 2016

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Sl No. Names of the States
1. Gujarat
2. Kerala
3. Madhya Pradesh
4. Maharashtra
5. Odisha
6. Punjab
7. Rajasthan
8. Tamil Nadu
9. Uttar Pradesh